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We wish we might chronicle more such important studies by American teachers of English.

Oliver Farrar Emerson

Cornell University

School English. A Manual for Use in Connection with the written English Work of Secondary Schools. By GEORGE P. BUTLER, formerly English Master in the Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N. J. American Book Company, 1894.

This is an excellent book for the actual use of the teacher in the class room, or for the individual who wants to review his studies in English in a logical and systematic way. The author has provided what he "believes to be a logical classification of the best directions for avoiding errors and securing a good style." Probably no two teachers would agree on such a classification, but this is good, and only actual use and wide experience would enable one to speak with authority. We know an excellent teacher of English who begins with punctuation. And the many essays published in the current educational magazines since the teaching of English began to be discussed so prominently reveal no marked consensus of opinion on methods. That belongs to the teacher, and has to be discovered for himself. But this book will be a welcome help to the teacher who is searching for help, and a safe guide to the mechanical teacher who knows no method except that of the book. This will at least not lead him astray, and the intelligent pupil will find it interesting, which is a feature of no little merit in books of this class. It may be suggestive of the author's classification of subjects to print the table of contents :

Introduction, 9

PART I—RHETORIC

I. English Words,	13
II. Correction of Errors in the Use of Words,	35
III. Correction of Errors in Construction,	50
IV. Clearness, Force, and Harmony,	75
V. Figures of Speech,	119
VI. Errors in the Use of Figures,	152

PART II—COMPOSITION

I. Preliminary Suggestions,	159
II. Letter Writing,	163
III. Exercises from Extracts,	175
IV. Description and Narration,	192
V. Essays,	203
VI. Debate,	212
VII. Punctuation and Capitals,	218

APPENDIX

I. A Short History of the English Language,	240
II. Goldsmith's "Deserted Village,"	256
Index,	267

In III of part I will be found a summary of twenty rules for correcting errors in the use of words. The mastery of this chapter of twenty-four pages would go a long way towards the improvement of ordinary school English.

But the most excellent feature of the book is in the examples of good English, the apt quotations of sentences to illustrate the lessons in hand. These nearly all have the charm of freshness, and the merit of interest. The selections too are in the main admirable, and cover a fair range of poetry and prose. There is Shelley's Cloud, Gray's Elegy, Goldsmith's Deserted Village, The Passions of Collins, a fair amount of poetry. And the prose is equally good. Addison's Vision of Mirza, De Quincey's English Mail Coach in parts, selections from Bunyan, Macaulay, Dickens, Goldsmith, give the pupil a generous draught from the "well of English undefiled." There is this great advantage at any rate, that the pupil cannot use the book without getting a considerable acquaintance with good literature.

On the importance of good models and the necessity of learning to read well in order to write well the author gives some suggestive hints. John Morley in his now classic essay "On the Study of Literature" ventures "to doubt the excellence and utility of the practice of over-much essay-writing and composition." "I think," he says, "as far as my observation has gone, that men will do better for reaching precision by studying carefully and with an open mind and a vigilant eye the great models of writing than by excessive practice of writing on their own account." Certainly the models should go hand in hand with the rules, and if the teacher errs on either side it is apt to be on that of rules and "the practice of over-much essay-writing and composition." *In medio tutissimus ibis* is a good motto in this work and one which this book illustrates.

One thing chiefly one would suggest by way of criticism, and that not at all ungraciously. There is room for condensation with care, and the shorter such a book is the better. The author's own sentences seem to be studiously framed after the instructions of the rules. There is a lack of vigor and directness in sentences that may be "faultily faultless," according to such rules. There is a power in short sentences as in short words.

The paragraph on Force, p. 93, seems to us to lack force. That on p. 95 seems to lack directness. Occasionally a false impression is given. On p. 96 is a citation from Dr. Gregory's "Memoir of Robert Hall": "In one of my earliest interviews with him I used the word *felicity* three or four times. He asked me, 'Why do you say felicity? Happiness is a better word, and genuine English, coming from the Saxon, and more musical, as are generally the words derived from Saxon.'" This is all well and good. But the teacher who goes to substituting happiness for felicity, or any other Saxon word arbitrarily for a Latin derivative at random, on the strength of this authority, will make sorry work of it. The result will be neither happy nor felicitous. Hamlet's advice is too nobly serious to be used in this way, but we cannot refrain: "Absent thee from felicity awhile," but not forever.

But on this whole subject of essay writing we are reminded of Charles Lamb's experience, as related in the inimitable essay on "The Old and the New Schoolmaster." "One of these professors, upon my complaining that these little sketches of mine were anything but *methodical*, and that I was unable to make them otherwise, kindly offered to instruct me in the *method* by which young gentlemen in *his* seminary were taught to compose English themes."

O. B. Rhodes

Adams, N. Y.

A History of the United States, by ALLEN C. THOMAS, A. M.,
Professor of History in Haverford College, Pa. D. C.
HEATH & Co., Boston, U. S. A.

The feature of this book is its emphasis of the historical events of this country since 1788—the era of the adoption of the Constitution. Two-thirds of its four hundred and ten pages are devoted to this period. We think Prof. Thomas has done well in thus adjusting the proportions of his subject. In the regulation school history of the United States quite half is occupied usually with the statement of our historical origins. "Europe," Emerson used to say, "Stretches to the Alleghanies," which was true enough in the Forties, but the movement since has been forward, the process of modification and development immense, and the colonial Englishman, Dutchman, and Swede have had a new birth in the American of the great Valley of the West. A new citizen and state have been made on this